



## **Proposed Clark County Comprehensive Plan Language Regarding Equestrian Element**

### **Equestrian Element**

Clark County recognizes the contributions of equestrian livestock husbandry, training, competition, and recreation activities to the overall rural quality of life in Clark County. These activities provide a lifestyle value to numerous county residents and visitors and economic revenue for rural residents and business owners. There are numerous organizations that support the equestrian industry by providing education and promoting equine husbandry, including the Clark County Extension Service, Future Farmers of America, 4H, the Clark County Executive Horse Council, the Mt. St. Helens Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen, and numerous other special interest equestrian-related groups.

As growth continues to occur throughout the county, open land to sustain livestock and existing or potential trail segments may be lost to uncoordinated land development and road improvements. Also, requirements of the Endangered Species Act may limit livestock management choices and the location of new equestrian facilities on land constrained by large riparian corridors. Additionally, with the county's emphasis on preserving agricultural and forestry lands within the Resource and Rural Districts, the development of large equestrian facilities of a size and scale that would be incompatible with agricultural and forestry practices within these districts should be discouraged.

The Equestrian Community plays a vital role in Clark County's economy and rural character. Clark County is unique in the Portland metropolitan area for having many

one- to ten-acre exurban parcels. These properties, many of which host equine uses, are a premium attraction for some. According to the Clark County Equine Impact report (Clark County Executive Horse Council, 2009), 4.8% of Clark County households own equines. The estimated number of equines in Clark County is approximately 28,902.

## **Equestrian Overlay Zone**

This district is intended to ensure continued equestrian activities, encourage safe circulation within equestrian neighborhoods, access to regional/community trails or equestrian facilities, signage to alert residents, newcomers, and encourage travelers to the equestrian community, encourage environmentally sound horse keeping, and sustain the area's rich equestrian tradition.

## **Equestrian Element**

**Goal:** *To protect, preserve, and enhance the rural and equestrian character of Clark County, through sustainable ecological development practices.*

### **3.6 Policies**

- 3.6.1 Complete the acquisition, development, funding, and construction of the equestrian portion of Vancouver-Clarks Parks' Regional Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan.
- 3.6.2 Create and adopt a Clark County Park Code to implement these trail systems.
- 3.6.3 Include the trail systems in the Arterial Atlas Road Standards.
- 3.6.4 Integrate trail systems and open space within rural centers and urban areas, thus enhancing the overall character of existing development, providing additional economic opportunities, and providing additional opportunities for the reduction of motorized transportation.
- 3.6.5 Educate the general public regarding the benefits to all citizens of equestrian based communities. These may include but are not limited to:
  - a) The preservation of open space through the use of shared habitats
  - b) Improved water quality due to open space and multi-use trail system buffers
  - c) Wildlife corridors

- d) Improved air quality due to the use of expanded/interlinked non-motorized trail systems
  - e) Positive impacts to the local economy not only by equestrians, both local and at large, but also local and visiting non-equestrians utilizing trails and open space
  - f) Increased values and faster sales for all properties adjacent to or nearby trail systems or other open space
  - g) Open space and multi-use trail systems provide recreational opportunities for non-equestrians, resulting in significant health/fitness benefits and therefore an overall reduction in healthcare costs
  - h) Unique social and educational opportunities
  - i) Business opportunities which meet equestrian and recreational needs.
- 3.6.6 Provide historical information to the public regarding the significance of equines in the county's cultural heritage, as well as historical information about specific trails and open space.
- 3.6.7 Educate the general public about the myths and facts surrounding the equine's use on trail systems, conservation lands, etc.
- 3.6.8 To encourage safe interactions between equestrians, non-equestrians, and motorized vehicles; educate the general public regarding proper equine etiquette.
- 3.6.9 Encourage new equestrian residential development to adopt residential cluster design concepts with shared use facilities, and permanently designated open spaces, thereby reducing the overall environmental impact and protecting sensitive or otherwise high quality habitat. They must be compatible with surrounding land uses and should be located adjacent to or in proximity to other open space, multi-use trails, and/or rural centers or urban areas. These new developments should include appropriate internal trails, as well as trails allowing linkage to rural centers or urban areas, multi-use trail systems, open space, regional parks, etc., as well as natural buffers to screen facilities, primary roadways and structures from adjacent properties.
- 3.6.10 Encourage all new construction and development to meet or exceed LEED certification standards, or equal.
- 3.6.11 Encourage equestrian owners to employ best management practices for animal health, to protect the environment, and be sensitive to surrounding neighbors and land uses.
- 3.6.12 Preserve quality agricultural lands to ensure adequate and sustainable local feed production.
- 3.6.13 Develop an identity program. The County will encourage the appropriate organizations and public agencies to promote Clark County as a regional, state, and national equestrian and recreational destination. This could include

the following: marketing materials, signs, websites, parks, trails, facilities, events, services, equestrian and/or ecological tourism (eco-tourism) tourism.

- 3.6.14 Encourage economic growth by promoting commercial opportunities that provide viable equestrian based services along major travel corridors, multi-use trail systems, parks, or other facilities as appropriate.
- 3.6.15 The County should investigate providing incentives to promote equestrian businesses by lowering any applicable fees.
- 3.6.16 Expand existing public facilities, add facilities, and/or develop a new equestrian park, which address the needs of the County's equestrian community and will provide the appropriate venue and services required to attract large regional or national equine events and thereby further enhance economic development.
- 3.6.17 The County should partner with an organization (i.e. The Executive Horse Council) to develop a regional equestrian events center.
- 3.6.18 The County, in conjunction with cities, should consider adopting a countywide planning policy that allows for equestrian uses in urban areas.